



Maine Small Business Advocate

Fact Sheet

What is the Small Business Advocate's role?

Maine's Small Business Advocate serves as an independent voice for Maine small business owners within our state's regulatory system. The Advocate works directly with small businesses (50 employees or fewer) that have specific grievances with one or more regulatory agency's enforcement actions. The Advocate's top priority is to assist small business owners who feel they are being treated unfairly or improperly by state agencies.

The Advocate is not a substitute for established agency procedures or the formal appeals process. The Advocate cannot provide legal advice or reverse legal or adjudicatory determinations.

Why is the work of the Small Business Advocate important?

As an appointee of Maine's Secretary of State, the Advocate serves as an independent, accountable and appropriate check on the state's efforts to regulate Maine businesses. This role is the first of its kind in the state and the nation, demonstrating our state's commitment to ensuring Maine's small businesses have every chance at success.

The Advocate advises and staffs the Regulatory Fairness Board, chaired by the Secretary of State. This board, with members from the private sector appointed by the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House, reports to the legislature and Governor annually with recommendations for regulatory and statutory changes that may enhance Maine's business climate. The Advocate comments on proposed rules and testifies on legislation affecting the interests of Maine's small businesses. Please contact the Advocate to share your ideas on improving Maine's regulatory environment.

How are small businesses served by the Small Business Advocate?

1. A small business owner who feels he or she is being treated unfairly or inappropriately by a state agency in a way that may create an economic hardship can request assistance from the Small Business Advocate. Business owners seeking assistance should be prepared to offer complete and accurate information to enable the Advocate to effectively research and address their concerns.
2. The Advocate researches pertinent statutes and rules/regulations, and consults with the small business and state agency/ies involved to determine the facts underlying the complaint.
3. The Advocate serves as an intermediary between the small business and the agency/ies to determine an appropriate course to address legitimate grievances.
4. When necessary, the Advocate will request that the Secretary of State issue a regulatory impact notice to the Governor outlining the fact finding and recommending an alternative means of effective enforcement that would relieve the small business of the significant economic hardship imposed.

How do I contact the Small Business Advocate?

Please call, email, write, or fax:

Peggy Schaffer, Small Business Advocate
Office of the Secretary of State
148 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0148
Office: (207) 626-8410
Fax: (207) 287-8598
E-mail: peggy.schaffer@maine.gov
Website: <http://www.maine.gov/sos/sba>

Thank You!